Agostinho Neto University

Faculty of Arts

Department of English language and Literature

Proverbs in Things Fall Apart: Classification, Context and Meaning

A work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature

By

José Ngola Carlos

Tutor: Nicolau N. Manuel, Ph.D.

Luanda, 2020

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Acknowledgments

These four complete years of school gave me new and better ways of looking to life and understand it. All this is due to the efforts of my dear tutor, Dr. Nicolau N. Manuel, who is, without any doubt, an example of an engaged scholar. I deeply admire his clear and eloquent reasoning on matters and deep knowledge on the field of Linguistics. It is due to his serious attitude toward science and academic achievements that I came to appreciate the treasure in books.

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Abstract

This research paper deals with the use of proverbs in the Novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. As a descriptive work, its aim is to describe the proverbs in the Novel, classify them, interpret and explain the meaning of the proverbs in the context. Due to the purpose established, qualitative research method was the chosen, specifically the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This research method gives the needed approaches that lead to the thematic and subjective conclusion, that result from the interpretation and explanation of the proverbs and their meaning on the context they appear in the Novel. The study has shown that *Things Fall Apart* has a sum of thirty four proverbs, where thirty two are said by men and two exclusively by women. The proverbs found were classified based on their theme. In the Novel we can find religious proverbs, psychological proverbs, social proverbs and ethical proverbs. Because of the peculiar traces of four specific proverbs and the limits imposed on the number of papers this work should have, only four proverbs were analyzed, interpreted and explained. Among the proverbs, one is used as an appeal to the moral sense, the second, as a mean of persuasion, the third, for encouragement and the last, as an incentive to hard work for success.

Key words: Proverb, classification, context, meaning, novel, Things Fall Apart.

Resumo

Este trabalho de pesquisa lida com o uso dos provérbios dentro do Romance *Things Fall Apart* de Chinua Achebe. Como um trabalho essencialmente descritivo, seu objectivo é descrever, classificar, interpretar e explicar o significado dos provérbios dentro do contexto no Romance. Por causa do propósito estabelecido, o método de pesquisa qualitativo foi o escolhido, especificamente a Análise Crítica do Discurso (CDA). Este método de pesquisa dá-nos as ferramentas para se ter dados temáticos e uma conclusão subjectiva, resultante da análise, interpretação e explicação dos provérbios e seus significados no contexto em que aparecem no Romance. Este estudo mostrou que *Things Fall Apart* tem uma soma de trinta e quatro provérbios, onde trinta e dois foram ditos por homens e dois exclusivamente por mulheres. Os provérbios encontrados foram classificados atendendo o assunto de que se retratam. Assim, no romance, foram encontrados provérbios religiosos, provérbios psicológicos, provérbios sociais bem como provérbios éticos. Por causa dos traços peculiares que quatro provérbios apresentam e dos limites quanto ao número de páginas que este trabalho deveria conter, apenas quatro provérbios são analisados, interpretados e explicados. Dentro dos quais, um é usado como apelação ao senso moral, o segundo, como meio de persuasão, o terceiro, para encorajar e o último, como incentivo ao trabalho árduo para se atingir o sucesso.

Palavras-chave: Provérbio, classificação, contexto, significado, romance, Things Fall Apart.

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Dedication

To my lovely mother, Maria Fernanda dos Santos, and my dear father, Zeca Carlos, who had supported me emotionally with their encouragement to resist giving up studying and materially with some money for taxi in moments I did not have how to deal with the school expenditures. Special thanks to my godparents, Zacarias Monteiro and Vânia Monteiro, who played an important role in the realization of this paper, without them, I could not have it printed or even presented.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1.Background of the Problem

In his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe extensively uses proverbs as a literary device and as a mean to reaffirm the African authentic cultural value which is every single day neglected by the Africans, when they show to be ignorant of their own ways of life and denied by them too, when, even knowing, refuse to be identified with the African's philosophies and ways of doing things.

One large tendency today by the Africans, and particularly by the Angolans, is to consume everything from countries out of African circle. This attitude has been taking many people to think that what is indigenous is worthless and of no use. Whereas, the exogenous is highly valued and appreciated more than what is produced inside, it goes from what we eat to what we believe. Thus, the African culture is forgotten with its moral standards, values and philosophies.

Mary Landers (2001) sees things from the same perspective. She says that industrialization and subsequent migration lead many Africans to experience social disruption and loss of social structure or unity. As a result, many traditions and indigenous knowledge in the form of narrative and proverbs, as well as, the mechanisms for transmitting them have been neglected and lost.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

Through the eras, major researches on the field of paremiology were mainly collection of proverbs and proverbs comparison among countries or communities (Rezaei, 2012). Now, attempts have been made to go beyond this kind of study. Many researchers have extended their interest toward the syntactic, phonologic, semantic and pragmatic analysis of proverbs.

Things Fall Apart is a masterpiece in the African Literature. For this reason, it has been extensively analyzed. Though there are studies of the proverbs used in the Novel, there is not any published scientific research done with the goal of identifying the total number of proverbs used in the Novel and its correspondent classification, analysis and

interpretation. No researcher has attempted to find out the frequency of proverbs used by women compared with the use men made of it in the Novel under discussion.

1.3.Research Questions

Because of the reasons presented above, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1.3.1. How many proverbs there are in Things-Fall-Apart?
1.3.2. How can these proverbs be classified?
1.3.3. In which contexts these proverbs are used?
1.3.4. What the meaning of the proverbs under study?
1.3.5. With which purpose are the proverbs used?
1.3.6. How many proverbs are uttered by men and how many are used by women?
1.3.7. In which circumstances women use proverbs?
1.3.8. Are there any instance were children or colonizers made use of a proverb?

1.4.Reason for conducting the research

Science is progressive, not static. This mean that, unlimited research is needed to add in the present stock of knowledge science have on many issues. Many efforts were already made to accomplish this. For example, extensive researches were made on many fields of study and many others are still being made to assure progression in science and consequently welfare to all human beings.

This study is a contribution for science knowledge growth and continuous human progression. It gives detailed description that will help readers of the Novel under discussion, i.e. *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, to understand it better and while reading it, relish to the full.

Things Fall Apart portrays one African community, that is, a Nigerian community, its moral conducts, education strategies, procedures to problem solving, or as Gitanjali Gogoi says: “it express African sensibilities” (Gogoi, 2017, p. 52). Thus, understanding the frequency of proverbs use, the reasons why they are used, the circumstances in which proverbs are used, as well as the meaning in context of proverbs, will help readers and

the worldwide scientific communities to understand and appreciate the richness, beauty and value embedded in African cultures.

Therefore, this work serves the purpose of attraction, attraction of the Africans and Non-Africans to the richness of African culture.

1.5.Relevance of the study

In the field of paremiology, many researchers have agreed that proverbs have great value. Its value extends from a literary device, i.e. a mean to authenticate the African use of language, to do cultural manifestation, i.e. a mean to reflect the beliefs, norms, customs and values of Africans.

Proverbs are part of folklore. It comes from the people and for the people. Having that said, proverbs created by Africans are a mean of Africans' expression of their way of living and seeing life. Meanwhile, understanding the use of proverbs by Africans will surely help those interested to understand the African culture, on the contrary, ignoring the African richness of proverbs and metaphors would be a loss (Landers, 2001, p. 24).

There is no limit to the functions proverbs can play; it is given due to the complexity of life. Each circumstance in life demands wisdom of every kind (Dosse, 2006), and proverbs are surely complete units of words containing much wisdom to deal with any circumstance. Peterson says that "proverbs depict art of living skillfully in whatever actual conditions we find ourselves" (Peterson, 1996, p.282 as cited in Dosse, 2006, p. 4). For example, "proverbs encourage abstract thinking and reasoning" (Daniel, 1987, p. 482 as cited in Landers, 2001, p. 24). These are indispensible abilities to navigate life well, avoid problems or deal with them and interpret what people say in order to react appropriately.

1.6.Delimitation of the Study

Far from being a complete work in the study of proverbs in relation to the Novel, *Things Fall Apart*, this paper has many limitations. For example, nothing is discussed on the role proverbs played in the education of the children, the vision of the Ibo society portrayed by the proverbs in Novel, as well as, the possible impacts the use of proverbs had on the hearers. Though the study attempts to find out the whole sum of proverbs in the Novel and classify them, space here restricts the amount of proverbs to be analyzed.

1.7.Overview of the study

The present paper contains five chapters and each chapter constitutes an important add to the understanding of the matter being discussed here. The first chapter is the introduction. In this part of the work is presented, among other things, the context in which the problem being studied arises, the questions formulated as the guidelines to conduct this research, the motives for conducting the research, and the possible practical benefits it can bring to the African communities.

The second chapter is the literature review. This chapter starts giving a general view on the topic, beginning with how different authors define proverbs. More than this, it goes back to the origins of when and how proverbs started and were used. In a certain point of this chapter, proverbs are studied in relation to culture and various approaches are given to the understanding of proverbs. Then, the characteristic features of proverbs are discussed in relation to phonetics, semantics and syntax. Only then proverb is studied as literary mean used by Chinua Achebe to achieve specific settled goals in relation to Africa and the world.

Due to the fact that there is not any acceptable scientific work done without a method, the third chapter, which is the research methodology, deals with the choice made of the method to conduct this paper and the reason why that particular choice suited better for the study.

Then follow the fourth chapter, data presentation and analysis. In this work, this chapter starts acquainting us with the author of the Novel, and it also gives a summary of it. The proverbs in the Novel under discussion are analyzed, classified and interpreted.

The conclusion is the last chapter. In the conclusion, a summary of the main points of the work are presented, this includes the results from this study, and because of the unavoidable limitations this work was submitted to, was necessary to leave suggestions for all those interested in conducting any further study in the field in relation to the proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1.Definition of Proverbs

There has been an enormous increase of interest in the study of proverbs in the part of many scholars around the world during the past few decades. Salwa Ahmed says that, "studying proverbs has become a very attractive and popular field for many scholars" (Ahmed, 2005, p. 21). These efforts behind the interest of the various researchers on collecting, analyzing and comparing proverbs stress the importance of the use of proverbs in the actual society.

Within the effort of studying proverbs, many scholars have attempted to define it, though; Ahmed (2005), who mentions Wolfgang Mieder stating the following words, has regarded the task of defining proverbs as an old problem: "Not only did such great minds as Aristotle and Plato occupy themselves with the question of what constitute a proverb, but early Greek scholars in particular wrestled with this seemingly insurmountable task as well" (Popular Views of the Proverbs, 1999 – DP Journal, V.5, as cited in Ahmed, 2005:13).

Not just only Ahmed and Mieder find it difficult giving a comprehensive and wholly covering definition of what a proverb is. Ted Hildebrandt (2005) also recognizes the difficulties encountered by scholars in giving a satisfactory definition of a proverb that would cover the varied functions it plays.

Though almost impossible a complete definition of a proverb, many paremiologists have put forth their notion of what a proverb is. Cuddon, for example, defines proverb as being "a form of expression of great antiquity" (Cuddon, 1984, p. 537, as cited in Rezaei, 2012, p. 1104).

Cristina Heras Ramírez defines proverbs as "interesting pieces of popular wisdom and tradition belonging to any culture, which help us to foreground the values and shared beliefs held by a speech community" (Ramírez, 2015, p. 1).

Bonifácio Tchimboto gives another definition on proverb; he says that "proverb, which is also known as paremy, is all phrase fruit of human thought and experience" (Tchimboto, 2017, p. 5).

The Iranian scholar, Mollanazar, conveys his own notion of proverb this way: “A proverb is a unit of meaning in a specific context through which the speaker and hearer arrive at the same meaning” (Mollanazar, 2001, p. 53 as cited in Syzdykov, 2014, p. 319).

Ferraro defines proverb as being:

> A saying that expresses a common truth”, he continues saying that proverb “deals with truth simply and concretely and teaches the listener a lesson. It can help to understand a culture and can help to determine if it is a group-oriented culture or an individual-oriented culture. It may also help in understanding what is desired and undesired as well as what is considered correct or incorrect in the culture (Ferraro, 1990, as cited in Rong, 2013, p. 32).

The list of scholars suggesting a definition of what proverbs are is very long to be presented in this study. Here should be mentioned, for example, definitions given by Timen (2015), Akporobaro (2008) and Yisa (1998, as cited in Alimi, 2012, p. 121), just to reference some. However, it is worth citing here the definition of Wolfgang Mieder, a well-reputed scholar in the field of the studying of proverbs.

Razaei, for example, considers him as “a prominent proverb scholar in the United States” (Rezaei, 2012, p. 1104), Hildebrandt, as “the world’s leading paremiologist” (Hildebrandt, 2005, p. 4), these all credits are strengthen with the fact that, Mieder is referenced in almost every study conducted in the field of paremiology. He defines the term proverb as follow: “A short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder, 2004, p. 3 as cited in Rezaei, 2012, p. 1104).

When closely analyzed, it is perceived that the definitions put forth by the many scholars are correlated and co-supportive. None of them seems to contradict the other. Rather, each one gives supplementary information aiming to clarify or assert something that the others have failed to refer. Even more, Nilüfer Can says that: “Each and every definition has led scholars to discuss the features of proverbs and what is prototypical of them” (Can, 2011, p. 23), adding to this, Ramírez says that, “many of the definition we find of proverbs are related to wisdom and sagacity” as well as, considered “as expressions of common or shared cultural beliefs and wisdom” (Ramírez, 2015, p. 4).

This shows that, more than mere repetitions of definitions, the attempts on defining proverb help many to understand clearly the depth, length and largeness behind

the concept of proverbs, and that is surely true what Ahmed says about the numerous definitions given by different scholars: “There is a universal agreement about what constitutes a proverb” (Ahmed, 2005, p. 14).

From its etymology, which is Latin, a root and a prefix make up the word “proverb”. The Latin word “proverbium” is the combination of the prefix *-pro* meaning “forth” and the root -verbum meaning “word”. This suggests that the literal meaning of word proverb is “a set of words put forth” (D’Angelo, 1977, p. 365, as cited in Can, 2011, p. 22)

2.2.Antiquity of Proverbs

It is agreed among scholars that proverb, as a genre, is part of the huge bunch of oral literature from the folk. That is why it is called “folk wisdom” by the International Reading Association ([IRA], 2003), as well as “the genre of the traditional verbal folklore” by Farah Timen (2015, p. 14016). And for the same reason, Sharma says that, of the various forms of folk literature, proverbs are believed to be the first oral literature as it was easy to memorize and use (Sharma, 1999).

What these scholars say reveal the antiquity of the use of proverbs. Since proverbs exist in all human languages, they are as old as the languages they are part of (Ahmed, 2005). In other words, proverbs came in vogue since the time when man started using language in society. The various utterances made in the books of Upanishads and Brahmans, the abundant use of proverbs during the time of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the epic period, and the proverbs incorporated in the Egyptian book ‘the book of the Dead’ written circa 3700 BC., the oldest book written in this country, establish the antiquity of proverbs.

Choudhury informs that “prior to the development of writing in the beginning of 4000 BC all literature was oral; hearing and memory were the only methods of preservation of the lore of the wise in the ancient times” (Choudhury, 2001, p. 8). Proverbs are from the time where there was not any written form. This is strengthened by what Ramírez says regarding the antiquity of proverb usage, “before they were recorded in a written form they were already well-known in the oral tradition” (Ramírez, 2015, p. 1). Because of its conciseness in form, simple syntax, rhyme and parallelism, just to mention a few, it has contributed for its popularity in the ancient times, before the arrival

of writing. In those days, verse was preferred to prose, as it was easy to remember and retain. This is in accordance to what Nilüfer Can says, "One of the typical features of proverbs is their concise forms. However, the shorter the proverbs, the more popular they are likely to be since their short forms makes them more memorable and easy to use" (Can, 2011, p. 37).

Obiechina, in his study entitled *Narrative Proverbs in the African Novel* defends the fact that the arousal of the written literature form, by no means has made the literature of the oral society disappear.

> Rather, a synthesis takes place in which characteristics of the oral culture survive and are absorbed, assimilated, extended, and even reorganized within a new cultural experience. Also, vital aspects of oral literature are absorbed into an emerging written literature of greatly invigorated forms infused with vernacular energy (Obiechina, 1992, pp. 197-230).

Walter Ong (1982) is of the same idea when he says, "writing from the beginning did not reduce orality but enhanced it" (as cited in Obiechina, 1992, p. 197).

Aristotle, with his seminar work, Aphorisms, is rendered as the first scholar having studied proverbs and have taken scientific research on it, though, unfortunately his treatise been now lost. Along with Aristotle, Plato, Sophocles, Homer, as well as Ferdowsi have applied proverbs in their works as a part of literature (Rezaei, 2013, p. 1104 and Mieder, 2004, p. 1, as cited in Syzdykov, 2014, p. 319, Trench, 1861, p.3). Since then, Ramírez informs that: "proverbs have been introduced in literature, films, drama, arts and music. Furthermore, they are used in advertising as a tool to convey popular wisdom and shared beliefs or ideas among a speech community" (Ramírez, 2015, p. 2).

2.3.Proverbs and Culture

Ferdinand de Saussure, a well-Known linguist, once has written:"The culture of a nation exerts an influence on its language, and the language, on the other hand, is largely responsible for the nation" (Saussure, 1915, p. 20).

Here, Saussure implicitly denotes that languages are crucial elements in the formation, refinement and development of the cultures around the world. Along with him, James Bird, in his work entitled *Wit and Wisdom from West Africa* comments that once Döhn, J. L remarked: "The highest object of language-study is to obtain an insight into the characters and thought-modes of mankind" (as cited in Bird, 1865, p. 14).

All this is to say that culture and Language are intrinsically interrelated and interdependent, in which one reveals the treats of the other and boost it. More serious, either, there is no culture without language and the opposite is also true, there is no language without culture.

Some people understand culture as being "the way of life, ideas, traditions, arts etc., produced and shared by a particular group of people" (Larouse, 1996, p. 249). This all is in fact what proverbs encode, the way people live, their way of thinking, their ways of communication, dress habits, joys and celebration, gods and goddesses, their feelings, values, customs, etc. (Can, 2011, p. 15; Valley, p. 114; Syzdykov, 2014, pp. 318, 320; Landers, 2001, pp. 2; and Ahmed, 2005, pp. 4).

Many scholars assert that, understanding the nature of proverbs, their properties and contextual meaning, helps in perceiving, understanding and preserving the culture of the society or community from which the proverbs belong (Hidasi, 2008, as cited in Can, 2011, p. 47; Ahmed, 2005, p. 5; Rong, 2013, p. 31; Hildebrandt, 2005, p. 11; Landers, 2001, p. 1; Yano, 1998, as cited in Can, 2011, p. 45). More than just helping in the understanding of a culture, Tchimboto says that proverbs also contributes "in the construction of identities, personalities, and the world-view of the people" he furthers his comment saying that "proverbs, as a feature of African culture, are more than a literary genre, they are expression of culture itself" (Tchimboto, 2017, p. 5). This final remark by Tchimboto is aligned with what Mary Landers defends, that proverbs are not only reflexives of life but part of life itself (Landers, 2001).

2.4.Approaches to the Understanding of Proverbs

Regarding the meaning of proverbs and the steps toward its understanding, Katz and Ferretti (2003) classify proverbs into **familiar proverbs** and **unfamiliar proverbs**. In their view, familiar proverbs are those which the "meaning are processed prior to the literal meaning", here the role of the context in the understanding of the proverb is irrelevant, because the proverb is familiar or already known to the hearer. In the words of Katz and Ferretti, "the context is not a determining contribution to the reading of a familiar proverb" (Temple and Honeck, 1999, p. 44, as cited in Ramírez, 2015, p. 6)

Whereas, in unfamiliar proverbs literal meaning is processed first or, as used in Lakoff-Turner proverb theory "the source domain schemas apprehended as provided by the proverb" (Bradbury, 2002, p. 267). Only after, noticing that the literal meaning does

not match with the context, the hearer is forced, somehow, to search for one second meaning for the proverb, i.e., the figurative meaning. In the words of Lakoff and Turner, "only then recipients map the source domain onto a target domain" (Bradbury, 2002, p. 267), which may be specified by the context or it may be unspecified.

The same way, Katz and Ferretti say that, "in non-familiar proverbs context plays an important role in solving ambiguity" (Katz and Ferretti, 2001, as cited in Ramírez, 2015, p. 8). Is in this case, in the understanding of unfamiliar proverbs, that Gibbs has commented that:

> The interpretation of a proverb involves a mapping process leading the hearer to search for a correspondence between the literal statement and its meaning within the context. Without the contextual information, the familiarity with the proverb would be decisive to understand the proverb's comprehension (Gibbs, 1994, as cited in Ramírez, 2015, p. 8).

Temple and Honeck (1999) establish that five steps are necessary to take when decoding the meaning of an unfamiliar proverb. These five steps are part of what they call a multistage model or extended conceptual base theory, *w*hich states that a speaker would have to undergo a process of literal understanding before reaching the figurative reading of the proverb. Ramírez (2015, p. 6) put them this way:

> **First**, the construction of the literal meaning;
> **Second**, the recognition that the literal meaning does not fit into the present context;
> **Third**, the literal transformation of the literal meaning is done;
> **Forth**, a figurative meaning is constructed, and
> **Fifth**, the second meaning is instantiated or applied in the given context.

2.5.Pragmatic Analysis of Proverbs

Here, what is aimed is to present how proverbs function in a given context. What are the duties of the hearer in encountering a proverb, and how Sperber and Wilson (1995) theory of relevance can be applied to the study of proverbs? Not just only this, Teun Van Dijk (2008) has conceptualized context as a socio-cognitive approach, so, how can this approach be applied to the study of proverbs? These are the goals to be reached.

2.5.1. Relevance Theory of Justification

Sperber and Wilson (1995) have conceptualized the theory of relevance, but not with the aim of applying it to the study of proverbs. Ramírez (2015) believe that this theory can be used successfully in the study of proverbs, though not being framed primarily for this purpose. In the theory of relevance by Sperber and Wilson, communication is defined as a process in which two mechanisms of information or processing devices are involved, where first, the modification of the physical environment of the hearer occurs, and second, the de-codification with the aim of achieving explicit communication (Ramírez, 2015).

When a proverb is uttered, "pragmatics assumes that what is communicated is the speaker's meaning that conveys a set of assumptions expressed either explicitly or implicitly" (Ramírez, 2015, p. 12). When the conveyed message is implicit, for example in the case of a non-familiar proverb to the hearer, the meaning of the message will be mainly inferred by the hearer, who will try to identify the speakers intention in what is being said. That is not the same when the proverb itself is familiar or explicit to the hearer.

Relevant can be taken as that, "that is correct or suitable for a particular situation" (Larousse, 1996, p. 889). This is in accordance with what Sperber and Wilson say in relation to their theory of relevance, "an assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in that context" (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 122, as cited in Ramírez, 2015, p. 12). This is the same in the case of proverbs; they are relevant since that they exert some effect in the context in which they are used. Ramírez says that the relevance of a proverb is achieved "due to the familiarity of the proverb to the hearer and its figurative meaning" (Ramírez, 2015, p. 13).

2.5.2. Speaker Meaning and Hearer Recognition

People do not just utter any sentence for the sake of just uttering it, in vacuum. They usually intend a purpose behind any utterance and strongly wish to be understood by those they are directing to. In fact, there is no communication where there is no way the hearer can recognize the communicator's intentions (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 25, as cited in Ramírez, 2015, p. 12).

When the proverb is familiar to the hearer, "people are able to automatically recognize the intended meaning of the proverb after hearing it" (Ramírez, 2015, p. 14). This happens due to the hearer stereotypical ideas on relation to the proverb or its frequent

use. This takes us to the conceptualization of presumption of relevance by Wilson and Sperber. They say that, every time we talk we communicate presumption of relevance. This presumption of relevance leads the hearers to believe or presume that what the speaker communicates is something relevant for the context (Can, 2011).

The recognition of the meaning of a familiar proverb, by the hearer, occurs because of the mutual manifestness of shared cognitive environment. This mutual or shared cognitive environment happens given the fact that there are stereotypical assumptions or ideas that the speaker shares with the hearer. Mutual manifesteness, as a cognitive or mental framework, shared by the interlocutors, come to facilitate the hearer to recognize the proverb and its meaning in relation to the context where they are found, something difficult to happen in the case of an unfamiliar proverb, where the "set of stereotypical assumptions is difficult to achieve" (Hildebrandt, 2005, p. 8).

2.5.3. The Theory of Context by Teun Van Dijk

From Teun Van Dijk (2008) standpoint, context is a notion of crucial importance in understanding discourse in society. Though not framing his theory toward the understanding of proverbs directly, his new view of context as "(inter) subjective constructs designed and ongoingly updated in interaction by participants as members of group and communities" and not just "some kind of objective condition or direct cause" is relevant for the studying of proverbs (Dijk, 2008, p. 12).

Van Dijk argues that "if context were objective social conditions or constraints, all people in the same social situation would speak in the same way", but that is not what really happens. People, though being in precisely the same social environment, will speak always differently, that happens because the physical environment by itself does not fit the definition of what context is, something beyond it is required. That is what Van Dijk defends in his book *Discourse and Context – A Sociocognitive Approach.* He defines context as "participant constructs" (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 12).

Ruth Finnegan, quoting a Fante elder, wrote, "There is no proverb without the situation" (Finnegan, 2012, p. 395). From this, is simply logical that there is no significant meaning to a proverb uttered out of context. This way of thinking is also aligned with what Van Dijk says that "context is an obvious component of communicative events".

He adds even more that: “We do not properly understand complex phenomena without understanding their context” (Van Dijk, 2008, pp. 10, 21).

Landers also recognize the extreme importance context plays in the understanding of proverbs, as well as, how things can get complicated if the context is disregarded. She says: “Proverbs taken out of context without a good analysis of the full meaning could complicate validity” (Landers, 2001, p. 5).

Finnegan (1972), emphasizing the use and relevance of the context in the understanding of proverbs, says: “Proverbs are used on particular occasions, by individuals in particular contexts and their wit, their attractiveness, their insights, even their meaning must be seen as arising from the context” (as cited in Ahmed, 2005, p. 25).

Ted Hildebrandt also has recognized the importance and roll of context when he said that: “Proverbs are critically dependent on the context and culture in which they are used” (Hildebrandt, 2005, p. 20).

That is to say that, for one to understand a proverb, he must understand the context in which it is uttered, because context is a main contribution for the identification and inference of implicit meaning in proverbs (Ramírez, 2015).

2.6.Functions of Proverbs

Proverbs are multifunctional. In fact, the many functions they play are out of expectation (Lauhakangas, 2007). Again, the context in which they will be applied will determine the function they will exert. Many researchers, on this vast field of study, have attempted to list the functions proverbs can assume. All the lists on the function of proverbs are important in the sense that they contribute to the understanding of the significance of proverbs in the modern society. Nevertheless, there is no such a complete list of the functions of proverbs. Here, is presented some functions proverbs can assume:

1. Proverbs are used as argument supporters;
2. Proverbs are used for criticism;
3. Proverbs are used to advice;
4. Proverbs are used to warn;
5. Proverbs are used as guidelines for security, decency and dignity;
6. Proverbs are used for didactic purpose or as teaching device;
7. Proverbs are used for therapy;

8. Proverbs are used for humor;
9. Proverbs are used to check and control behavior and attitude;
10. Proverbs are used to solve problems;
11. Proverbs are used to embellish speech, add color to everyday conversation and make effective points in talk;
12. Proverbs are used as indirect mean of saving face, avoiding crises and preserving politeness;
13. Proverbs are used to persuade;
14. Proverbs are often used to close or open argument; and
15. Proverbs are brought to conversation to make calculations of profitability (Lauhakangas, 2007; Hildbrandt, 2005; Finnegan, 2012; Landers, 2001; Al Timen, 2015; Tchimboto, 2017; Syzdykov, 2014; and Ramírez, 2015).

2.7.Grzybek Semiotic Categories

Larousse English Dictionary defines semiotics as "the study of communication, especially the relationship between words and the things or ideas they refer to" (Larousse English Dictionary [LED], 1996, p. 962).

According to Grzybek, there are three interrelated semiotic categories in relation to proverbs, The Heterosituativity, the Polysemanticity, and the Polyfunctionality (Park & Milicã, 2016).

The first semiotic category referenced is heterosituativety. The prefix *hetero-*, which means *that which is different* and the word *situativity, which* refers to *situation or context,* compose the word heterosituativity. Having that said, Heterosituativity alludes to the flexibility of a given proverb to be used in different situation or context.

Polysemanticity, as the second category, has as it constitutive elements the prefix *poly-* which means *various* and the word *semanticity,* a word derived from semantics, a branch of linguistics which deals with *meanings.* Thus, Polysemanticity is a category of semiotics that makes clear the manifold meaning that proverbs have. More clearly, proverbs have the potentiality of assuming various meaning depending on the context of use.

Finally, Polyfunctionality is cited as the last category of semiotics. In the words of Park and Milicã, "the same proverb may serve different functions in different contexts" (Park & Milicã, 2016, p. 388). This final semiotic category refers to the multifunctionality proverbs may have in relation to the specific situation in which they are being applied. The idea behind this concept is that one only proverb in different situations of use will function differently.

2.8.Characteristic Features of Proverbs

There are some linguistic features in proverbs that are worth noting, because of its frequent occurrence, they are phonological, semantical, and syntactical devices. These different features are termed proverbial markers (Mieder, 2004, as cited in Mac Coinnigh 2014).

2.8.1. Phonological aspects of proverbs

In linguistics, the area responsible for the study of the way sounds are produced and function in languages is termed phonology. Proverbs, being part of language, show some phonic markers, which serve as stylistic features. The phonic markers applicable on proverbs as defined by Arora (1995, as cited in Al Timen, 2015) are:

1) Alliteration: is the repetition of the same sound or latter in a proverb to produce a particular effect. For example, here is the repetition of the [p] sound in the proverb below: "**P**ractice makes **p**erfect".
2) Parallelism: it refers to the juxtaposition of two or more identical or equivalent syntactic construction in a proverb. As a rhetorical device, it is used for the purpose of emphasis, suggesting analogical relationships or comparisons (Rothstein, 1968, as cited in Mac Coinnigh, 2014).

To achieve parallelism, the constituent parts of proverbs are usually linked by two main methods of coordination, which are syndetic coordination and asyndetic coordination. In syndetic coordination, the terms that make up a proverb are linked by a conjunction. Whilst, in asyndetic coordination no conjunction is used (Mac Coinnigh, 2014). For instance, two proverbs are presented below showing the same syntactical construction, the first being syndetic and the other asyndetic:

> "**One enemy** is one too many, and **hundred friends** are not enough"
> "**Nothing** ventured, **nothing** gained".

3) Rhyme: is a phonic marker on proverbs that shows sameness of sound in the end of the words. For example:

"No p**ain**, no g**ain**".

4) Ellipsis: refers to the omission of a grammatical required word or phrase in a proverb that can be inferred. Here is an example of a proverb were the conjunction [but] was removed:

"Hope for the best, prepare for the worst".

2.8.2. Semantic aspects of proverbs

Semantics is understood as being the part of linguistics that studies the meaning of words and their relationship. Nilüfer Can has formulated the semantic relation on proverbs. He argues that for the semantic properties of proverbs, antonymy and synonymy constitute the semantic relation that can be seen in proverbs (Can, 2011; Mac Coinnigh, 2014).

According to Can, "proverbs are antonymous when they express contradictory ideas through related images, different images or when a figurative and a literal meaning of a proverb express opposite ideas" (Can, 2011, p. 39). For example:

1. "He who hesitates is lost – fools rush in" (Norrick, 2007, as cited in Can, 2011, p. 39).

From this proverb is perceived the importance of acting without delaying when it is the proper time to do so, because any delay would lead surely in a loss of something. While recognizing this fact, the proverb adds the attitude commonly portrayed by the fools, who rather than discerning the times, they just simply act in rush. Here, clear opposition is seen, due to the different contexts this proverb can be applied. Literary, the proverb is to be translated as the following: do not hesitate, hesitate.

2. "The near the church, the farther from God" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 125).

This is another instance of an antithetical proverb, as suggests Mac Coinnigh to the expression antonymy, where the second element of the proverb expresses the opposite of the first (Mac Coinnigh, 2014).

Proverbs are synonymous "when they express the same idea through parallel images, different images or when a figurative and a literal meaning of a proverb express similar ideas" (Can, 2011, p. 40). To illustrate:

3. "The leopard cannot change his spots – once a thief, always a thief" (Norrick, 2007, as cited in Can, 2011, p. 40).

A parallel can be seen in the idea presented in this proverb. That is to say, that, just like a leopard cannot change or alter his skin spot, being subdued to it until the death, the proverb suggests likewise that, a thief cannot change or alter his attitude toward stealing, he will remain thief as thief he is.

Or either:

4. "Far-fetched and dear-brought is good for ladies" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 124).

   As it can be seen from the proverb above, the elements that constitute the proverb exhibit a semantic relationship of synonymy, where the second element reiterates the meaning of the first element in different but equivalent terms (Mac Coinnigh, 2014).

2.8.3. Syntactic aspects of proverbs

Syntax, as a branch of linguistics, deals with how words are combined to form phrases or sentences. Proverbs are precisely this, sentences well ordered, intending a specific function in a given formulae.

2.8.3.1.Sentence Types

From a syntactic point of view, proverbs appear in various sentence types. These sentences can be classified into "distinct types according to the numbers of clauses and sub-clauses they contain" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 113). These sentences are:

1) Simple sentence: this sentence is the most basic sentence, and it contains one main clause, namely, a subject and a predicate, but no sub-clauses. Here are two proverbs in a simple sentence type:

   1.1. "[Silence waters] [run deep]" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 113).

   - The proverb sentence is affirmative, where the first part is the subject and the second the predicate or the verb.

1.2. “[Comparison] [is no reason]” (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 113).

- This second one is a negative proverb sentence, where the first part is a subject and the second the predicate or the verb.

2) Compound sentence: are those that contain multiple independent clauses, which are separated by a coordinator. Each clause that constitutes it are grammatically equal. Here is one example:

2.1. “[Falseness lasts an hour] and [truth lasts till the end of time]” (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 114).

- Here is clearly illustrated a compound proverb sentence with two clauses linked by the coordinator “and”.

3) Complex sentence: are sentences that possess one clause and one or more adjectival, nominal, or adverbial sub-clauses. Here is one example of a complex proverb sentence:

“[Who digs a pit for other] [falls into it himself]” (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 114).

- The first part of this proverb is a nominal sub-clause, and the second, a clause.

4) Compound-complex sentence: this type of sentence often features a multiplicity of clauses and sub-clauses. If a sentence contains at least two clauses and one sub-clause, fulfills the minimum syntactic requirement of a compound-complex sentence type. For example:“[When the oak is before the ash,] [then you will only get a splash;] [when the ash is before the oak,] [then you may expect an oak]” (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 115).

In this compound-complex proverb sentence, the first part is an adverbial sub-clause, the second part is a clause, the third an adverbial sub-clause, and the final part a clause.

2.8.3.2.Sentence Functions

There are typically four different sentence functions, and they can all be seen reflected in proverbs. These sentence functions are:

1) Declarative proverb sentences: are those that conveys information or ideas in the form of a statement. For instance:

- "Bad news travels fast" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 115).

2) Interrogative proverb sentences: these sentences take the form of a question. These proverbs, in the form of a question, are not meant to be answered, because the question are rhetorical. For example:

   - "Does a chicken have lips?"
   - "What would you expect from a pig but a grunt?" *(*Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 116).

   - The first question is a yes/no interrogative, which can elicit a yes or no answer. While the second a Wh-interrogative, which elicit open-ended answer.

3) Imperative proverb sentences: in these sentences, an order is given, either affirming something or denying something. For instance:

   - "Look before you leap"
   - "Don't go between the tree and the bark" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 116).

   - The first proverb is an affirmative imperative proverb sentence, and the second, a negative imperative proverb sentence.

4) Exclamatory proverb sentences: these are sentences, which express strong emotions, such as anger, elation, surprise, frustration, confusion, joy, love, sorrow, etc. And they are often times marked by an exclamatory mark (!). For example:

   - "What goes around comes around!" (Mac Coinnigh, 2014, p. 116).

   - Here is an exclamatory proverb sentence denoting an expression of hope.

2.9.Classification of Proverbs

The notion on classification is related to dividing the proverbs into definite or fixed classes. Many paremiologists have thought and suggested proverb's classes based on the alphabetic system, others on the form the proverbs may assume, and even some others have based their classification on the various themes proverbs may discuss. Here,

is preserved and presented the classification based on the theme of proverbs for being the easiest, simple and remarkable.

2.8.1. Religious proverbs: are those proverbs based on the rules and behaviors in relation to a belief in a god or gods. Here is an example:

- "To resuscitate, is easy to Allah" (Bird, 1865, p. 20).

This proverb is clearly seen as an expression of one's faith or belief in a deity. In the proverb, *Allah* is a given name to God, and the word *resuscitate* alludes to what God him alone can do and with certain facility, his ability and capacity as the source of all forms of life in the entire earth, to give life to those faithful who have lost it.

2.8.2. Ethical proverbs: are those proverbs based on the concept of what is morally right or wrong. For instance:

- "He, who separates men that are fighting, should not strike them" (Bird, 1865, p. 13).

This proverb is an assertion of what is taken as right or wrong. It puts clear that if someone finds two men fighting and he feels the need of intermediating between them, he has no right to strike either one or the other. The act of beating on one or on the two men fighting is considered as morally wrong, and no one is encouraged to do that by the proverb.

2.8.3. Social proverbs: are proverbs based on the human society, the way it is organized and the position individuals have in the society. For example:

- "A subjectless king is no king" (Bird, 1865, p. 11).

This proverb portrays part of the human society and the way it functions. In fact, by making reference to a king, the proverb is pointing to the monarchic societies, where a king is the main figure of a monarchy. More than just referencing the kind of human society, it shows what characterizes a good king, or monarch, his ability to speak wisely.

2.8.4. Scientific and psychological proverbs: these proverbs are related to the human Knowledge on how things in the world work.

- "The bird can drink much, but the elephant drinks more" (Bird, 1865, p. 14).

Birds and elephants, for some human societies, are part of common daily life. From their experiences and observations, they came to know that, birds are incapable of drinking as much as the elephants do. Thus, the above proverb fits in the class of scientific and psychological proverbs, because of its reference to human knowledge about the things in the world, i.e., birds and elephants, and how they function.

2.10. Proverbs and African Novel

Proverbs, because of its many functions and efficiency in the teaching process and conservation of the moral values and ethics, are highly regarded and used in almost all the countries of Africa (Finnegan, 2012; Alimi, 2012). There is not even the least of the fears in claiming that, it is the valuable heritage by the African people, passed down from generation to generation.

Knowing the great interest of the Africans toward the use of proverbs in various circumstances, that is not to wonder, if they use it in their stories and writings. As Emmanuel Obiechina says: "The story … is a primary form of the tradition, primary as a mode of conveying culture, experience and values and as a means of transmitting knowledge, wisdom, feelings and attitudes in oral societies" (Obiechina, 1992, p. 200). Proverbs were mainly, at the beginning, that is, in the moment of their original creation, transmition and use, part of the folk oral literature for thousands of years (Hildebrandt, 2005, Finnegan, 2012). Since the arousal of the system of writing, it has been extensively used "in epics, poems, songs, plays, novels, and modern advertising" (Mieder, 2004, p. xii, as cited in Hildebrandt, 2005, p. 3).

From the historical perspective, it is worth saying that the written history of African literature was made up by the missionaries. Who had the duty to teach the Africans about their faith and believes, through books on catechism, this are books composed by questions and answers about the principles of Christianity (Tchimboto, 2017). Along the history of the African literature is the history of the Africans proverbs registration, also made by the Christian missionaries as Tchimboto informs: "the written history of African proverbs began from the dawn of the XVII century by missionaries" (Tchimboto, 2017, p. 24).

2.11. The Use of Proverbs as a Literary Device

Writers mainly deal with the use of language, as the fundamental element in the realization of any written text, such as a novel or a piece of a poem. Language supplies

him with the words he needs to express his ideas and feelings. Moreover, creativity is also an indispensable element in the writing process, because a creative well-written text can grab the reader's attention and inform, divert or warn about something that could be harmful to the reader and save his life. The contrary is also true; a poor written text is bore some and time wasting for the reader.

Fortunately, languages contain a wide range of words from which the writer can choose for almost every thought, and there are numerous plans or methods of arrangement of these words, called literary devices. In other words, literary devices are specific language techniques or manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse, which writers use to create text that is clear, interesting, and memorable. Generally, these plans, methods, or techniques are used to assist the writer in developing cogent expressions pleasing to his readers (Abrams, 1981, as cited in Alimi, 2012)

Proverbs are extensively used in the works of many African novelists as a literary device (Rezaei, 2012). And Chinua Achebe is the foremost among them because of his high sense of literary ability (Alimi, 2012; Obiechina, 1992). The use of proverbs in African novels is justified by Obiechina in these terms: "it is legitimate to assume that their use is an essential feature of poetics of the African novel, a feature that derives from the interplay of creative principles of oral and literary traditions" (Obiechina, 1992, p. 200).

2.12. Previous Studies

Through decades, many scholars have been studying different aspects from the Novel, *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe and Emmanuel Obiechina, in his work *Narrative Proverbs in the African Novel* (1992), confirms the fact that *Things Fall Apart* has been in fact extensively analyzed by different scholars from various perspectives. But in relation to the study of proverbs presented in the Novel, there are few literature published found. This is attested by the fact that, among thirty three references read for the realization of this work, only three papers were discussing directly the study of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*, its description, analysis and interpretation.

That is not to say that there is no literature studying the use of proverbs in the Novel, but there are few found for this paper, as mentioned, among thirty three scientific papers, only three were found. And they are presented below.

The first paper is by Gitanjali Gogoi (2017). Gogoi deals mainly with Achebe's choice of proverbsin *Things Fall Apart*. He mentions that "In all of his five novels, Chinua

Achebe creatively uses oral cultural elements such as proverbs, folktales, myths etc. to convey different messages" (Gogoi, 2017, p. 52). And one of these messages is in response to the misrepresentation of African culture and people in the works of western writers like Joyce Cary and Joseph Conrad. We are told that that is the way *Things Fall Apart* arises.

> Gogoi goes on arguing Achebe's strategy in his use of proverbs saying that: Achebe uses the proverbs, myths and folktales as the depositories of values and customs. He shows that the community could exist as a unified entity because of their strong adherence to the values and ideals embedded in the proverbs. His demonstration of the dexterity with which Ibos used words is, of course, also an answer to what he took to be Conrad's fictional representation of Africans as people without language (Gogoi, 2017, p. 53).

Is precisely at this point that Achebe manages to use an element of the African oral tradition, i.e., proverbs, as a mean to make the language used by Africans to get more power. Gogoi comments that "these proverbs do not merely enhance the beauty of the language" it does more, "they also make the readers understand the value of the culture that was shattered in the process of colonialism" (Gogoi, 2017, p. 54).

The second work on proverb, in relation to the proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*, is by Alimi (2012). Alimi studies the use of proverbs as a literary device. He presents Achebe's view on the importance of proverb saying that "among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palmoil with which words are eaten" (Alimi, 2017 p. 122). That is to stress that, the use of proverbs is highly prized in the traditional African society and is used to portray certain actions or events in picturesque manner, making its use inevitable for the Africans.

As it happened with Gogoi, Alimi focuses on the reasons Achebe as selected to use proverbs in his writing, saying that it was by intention that Achebe used proverbs, aiming not merely to add touches of local color but to sound and reiterate themes, to sharpen characterization, to clarify conflicts and to focus on the values of the society he is portraying (Alimi, 2017).

The third work is by Emmanuel Obiechina (1992) entitled *Narrative Proverbs in the African Novel.* In this work, Obiechina reserves a place to talk specifically about the example of *Things Fall Apart*. Where he, different from the two firsts that limited their selves describing some proverbs of the Novel and comment on it, Obiechina discusses not the all sum of the proverbs of the Novel, but the nine Narrative Proverbs he found in

Things Fall Apart. He cites them in context and classifies, analyses the proverb from the context cited and shows the practical application of each narrative proverb he cites.

He goes on commenting why *Things Fall Apart* is a peculiar work in the use of proverbs, saying that:

> Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart is the best example of the use of narrative proverbs to express the distinctive quality of African fiction. Many African novelists employ the technique of narrative embedding, but in Things Fall Apart we have the most elaborate and the most successful use of the strategy for diverse formal, thematic, and aesthetic purposes (Obiechina, 1992, p. 204).

As it can be clearly seen, *Things Fall Apart* is a masterpiece in the African Literature. That is why it has been extensively analyzed by many researchers. Though there are studies of the proverbs used in the Novel, there is not any published scientific research done with the goal of identifying the total number of proverbs used in the Novel and its correspondent classification. No researcher has attempted to find out the frequency of proverbs used by women compared with those used by men in the Novel under discussion. That is the aim of this paper.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Type of Research

This work is mainly a descriptive work, also known as *ex post facto research* (Cothari, 2004). A descriptive research work aims to give an account of the affairs as it exists at present. Cothari says that "The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening" (Cothari, 2004, p. 3).

3.2. Methodologies

Research methodology is an expression that refers to the systematic way or ways the researcher uses to conduct the research work and solve the research problem, which is the reason for the research realization. Simply saying, research methodology "may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically" (Cothari, 2004, p. 8).

There are two types of research methods, Quantitative and qualitative method. These two methods have been applied in many areas of study, i.e., in sociology, philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, psychology, etc. (Litosseliti, 2010; Tavakoli, 2012).

Quantitative research method deals mainly with numbers. Its focus resides in using statistical procedures to determine whether the relationship between the manipulated variable (the selected participants) and the dependent variable (the characteristics or behavior of the participants) is significant for generalization. Hossein Tavakoli states that numbers constitute the "single most important feature of quantitative research" (Tavakoli, 2012, p. 508). In other hand, qualitative research method deals primarily with words. Its focus is to describe, understand and clarify human behavior (Tavakoli, 2012). Cothari clarifies the concept on this research method by stating that the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to "discover the underlying motives of human behavior" (Cothari, 2004, p. 3).

Because of the nature of this work, the chosen research method was the qualitative, within which special attention was given to Critical Discourse Analysis. That means, Critical Discourse Analysis is the emphasized method of discourse analysis being used here, though bit of the characteristics of the others discursive methods of analysis being present, i.e. Conversation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics.

The fundamental assumption of Conversation Analysis is that conversation is not held randomly and without any structure, rather it is a set of well-organized facts. Moreover, Interactional Sociolinguistics analyze the overtly stated in a discourse, as well as the implied meanings through contextualization cues i.e. the formal linguistic devices used during the conversation, as intonation, dialect selection, rhythm, etc. The three approaches to discourse analysis are interdependent in mirroring the aspects of social and cultural context (Podesva & Sharma, 2013).

Within Linguistics, the term discourse assumes a variety of meaning. For example, Podesva and Sharma define it as "language embedded in social interaction" (Podesva & Sharma, 2013, p. 460). For them, discourse is responsible for constructing and constituting the social realities, or better saying, any social reality depend upon the phenomenon called discourse. In addition, Hossein Tavakoli defines it in relation to Critical Discourse Analysis as "language in use" and as the "ways of talking about the world" (Tavakoli, 2012, pp. 129, 505). His last concept of discourse includes the ways of seeing the world and comprehending it. The definitions presented above give clear site to understand the linguistic notion of a proverb, which is also, without any doubt, language within the social interaction, portraying traces of how people see the world and comprehend it. However, for the present work, discourse is to be understood as proverbs.

3.3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis is a domain of Critical Applied Linguistics. Its aim is to investigate the existent relationship between language use, power and ideology (Tavakoli, 2012), i.e. how language portrays the way people see the world they live in, and their behavior toward each other. It is committed with criticizing the values of a society as drawn by the language being used in that particular community. That is why Critical Discourse Analysis starts its analysis focused on a social issue (Fairclough, 2001, as cited in Podesva & Sharma, 2013).

Having analyzed the concept of what may discourse be, it is likewise important to conceptualize the notion of the word *critical* in relation to discourse analysis. This approach of discourse analysis is termed critical because it carefully examines and judges a social phenomenon. On doing this, three steps are taken into consideration: description, interpretation and explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Tavakoli, 2012).

There is not only one single way to do Critical Discourse Analysis. Podesva and Sharma inform that Teun Van Dijk (2001), a leading scholar in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis, views this approach not "as a particular method of analysis" but "a critical perspective on doing scholarship – one that focuses on social issues" in relation to power and ideology (Podesva & Sharma, 2013, p. 478). While approaching discourse analysis, those who adhere to the critical perspective may focus on the macro level of discourse strategies, examine rhetorical patterns in discourse, explore relevant details of syntax or semantics, etc. (Stubbe, 2003, as cited in Podesva & Sharma, 2013).

3.4. Procedures

This paper has gone under specific procedures and submitted to a particular method of research, which is the qualitative method. This method was chosen because it gives the needed approaches that lead to the thematic and subjective conclusion, that result from the interpretation and explanation of the proverbs and their meaning on the context they appear in the Novel.

Because of the use of the qualitative research method, certain procedures where necessary from the collection of the data for analysis, which are the proverbs present in the Novel by Chinua Achebe, *Thinks Fall Apart*, to the meaning through the context in the Novel.

One first step taken was a careful repeated reading to know the total number of the proverbs present in the Novel and apprehend their meaning. The second step was the classification of the proverbs found. The classification consisted on dividing the proverbs into thematic classes. The third step was the selection of the proverbs for analysis. Among many, four where chosen. The act of determining this limited number was a motivated act, which had as principles the distinctive traces of the four proverbs, such as validity denial, ellipse and the fact that two of them were uttered by women, something rare in the Novel. Have selected the proverbs, critical discourse analysis was done through three

steps, which are, description of the circumstances in which the proverbs were mentioned, interpretation and explanation of the proverbs.

Chapter IV

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1.About the Author of the Novel

Chinua Achebe was born in Nigeria in 1930. He was raised in the large village of Ogidi and is a graduate of Ibadan University College. He worked for certain period in radio as the Director of External Broadcasting in Nigeria, unfortunately h is early career in radio ended in 1966, when he had to leave this post during the national upheaval that led to the Biafra War.

He was appointed Senior Research Fellow at Nsukka, the University of Nigeria. From 1972 to 1976, and again in 1987 to 1988, Achebe was a Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and also for one year at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. He has published novels, short stories, essays, and children's books.

Chinua Achebe was a prominent man of literature, has tested by the facts, he has received numerous honours from around the world, including the Honorary Fellowship of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, as well as more than twenty honorary doctorates from universities in England, Scotland, the United States, Canada, and Nigeria. He is also the recipient of Nigeria's highest award for intellectual achievement, the Nigerian National Merit Award.

Despite the attributes mentioned above, professor of English, director of External Broadcasting and man of literature, Chinua Achebe was also a husband and a father. He had four children.

4.2.Summary of the Novel

Things Fall Apart is a prestigious work of Africa Literature written by an African writer from Nigeria in 1958, whose name was Chinua Achebe. As is known, there is always some kind of purpose in every single work of Literature. The author of a piece of writing may write with the goal of teaching a lesson to the possible readers, to criticize certain behavior or attitude or even to amuse. Achebe, as a writer, has written *Things Fall Apart* with a goal, too. What he wanted to portray through the Novel is the fact that the Africans societies were already complex and evolving entities, with their own agendas,

philosophies of great depth, values, and internal conflicts, before the arrival of their colonizers.

Achebe's work is considered as a post-colonial work because it accounts the history of an African community, i.e. a Nigerian community called Ibo in its pre-colonial and early colonial periods during 1850-1900 (Gogoi, 2017), which had to encounter the power of the European Colonizer and face its subsequent drastic changes imposed by the occupant.

The novel starts with the internal upheavals of the members of the community due to their differences of character. For example, the protagonist in the Novel, Okonkwo, had a repulsive attitude toward becoming like his father, Unoka, who was a musician and unsuccessful economically and socially because of his habit of refraining from working. Okonkwo, through his attitudes and thoughts, showed how different he wanted to be. He wanted earnestly to take away the shame his father casted on their family through hard work and better achievements compared to the young people of his time.

He wanted also to prove to be a capable man, different from his full of debt father. In certain period of his life, Okonkwo could do it certainly, but the destiny turned against him with a bad fate. He became a tragic hero, killing himself, because he could not deal with the fact that his village and people could not fight the European Occupants with their religion, schools, government and system of justice imposed upon them all.

One very important aspect of this Novel is its beauty found in the African portrayed ways of bargaining and teaching. In the Novel, Chinua Achebe shows that African Proverbs played a very important role in preserving the ways of life of their ancestors and constituted a valuable resource of practical wisdom for the new generation with their problems. Men and women used them to solve their tensions, to entertain and teach their children. Holding on them assured well being and success to all those wise enough to perceive not only the beauty on the proverbs and short stories but also the wisdom from the past experience.

4.3.Presentation of the data

As it was stated above, this paper aims to descriptively present the proverbs in the novel written by Chinua Achebe, i.e. Things Fall Apart. Moreover, the proverbs are to be numbered, divided into classes, interpreted and explained.

4.3.1. Classification of the Proverbs in the Novel

A survey through a close reading and methodological counting was made to find out the number, context of use, and the meaning of proverbs in the novel Things Fall Apart by Achebe. The study has revealed that there are thirty four proverbs in the Novel, distributed in seventeen chapters of the Novel, respectively, chapter one, two, three, four, eight, ten, eleven, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, nineteen, twenty, twenty one, twenty two, twenty three and twenty four. This number excludes the three repeated proverbs in the Novel, or better say, they were only counted once, though two of them comes in a changed form.

The others chapters of the Novel are bare chapters regarding the use of proverbs. They are, chapters five, six, seven, nine, twelve, sixteen, eighteen and twenty five. These chapters contain not any reference to a proverb. Among the thirty four proverbs found only two are said by women and the others thirty two by men. There is no instance where a proverb is uttered by the children or the colonizers.

Here are the proverbs numbered and classified according to their themes:

Scientific and psychological proverbs

1. “The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them” (Achebe, 1958, p. 4).
2. “When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk” (Achebe, 1958, p. 6).
3. “A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing” (Achebe, 1958, p. 13).
4. “An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb” (Achebe, 1958, p. 13).
5. “Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching” (Achebe, 1958, p. 14).
6. “You can tell a ripe corn by its look” (Achebe, 1958, p. 15).
7. “A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches”. (Achebe, 1958, p. 45).
8. “A child’s fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm” (Achebe, 1958, p. 46).

9. “When mother cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth” (Achebe, 1958, p. 49).
10. “A baby on its mothers back does not know that the way is long” (Achebe, 1958, p. 73).
11. “If one finger brought oil it soiled the others” (Achebe, 1958, p. 90).
12. “Mother is supreme” (Achebe, 1958, p. 95).
13. “What is good among one people is an abomination with others” (Achebe, 1958, p. 99).
14. “Never make an early morning appointment with a man who has just married a new wife” (Achebe, 1958, p. 100).
15. “Living fire begets cold, impotent ash” (Achebe, 1958, p. 109).
16. “I cannot live on the bank of a river and wash my hands with spittle” (Achebe, 1958, p. 116).
17. “A child cannot pay for its mother’s milk” (Achebe, 1958, p. 117).
18. ‘As a man danced so the drums were beaten for him” (Achebe, 1958, p. 129).
19. “Whenever you see a toad jumping in broad daylight, then knows that something is after its life” (Achebe, 1958, p. 141).

Social proverbs

20. “If a child washed his hands he could eat with kings” (Achebe, 1958, p. 5).
21. “A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness” (Achebe, 1958, p. 12).
22. “The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did” (Achebe, 1958, p. 14).
23. “Looking at a king’s mouth one would think he never sucked at his mother’s breast” (Achebe, 1958, p. 17).
24. “The dog said, if I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play” (Achebe, 1958, p. 51).
25. “A man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself” (Achebe, 1958, p. 69).
26. “An animal rubs its itching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him” (Achebe, 1958, p. 117).
27. “The clan was like a lizard, if it lost its tail it soon grew another” (Achebe, 1958, p. 119).

28. “We approach a great man through his servants” (Achebe, 1958, p. 125).

Ethical proverbs

29. “It is not bravery when a man fights a woman” (Achebe, 1958, p. 67).
30. “Never kill a man who says nothing” (Achebe, 1958, p. 98).
31. “An Umuofia man does not refuse a call” (Achebe, 1958, p. 134).

Religious proverbs

32. “He who brings kola brings life” (Achebe, 1958, p. 3).
33. “Those whose palm kernels were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble” (Achebe, 1958, p. 17).
34. “When a man says yes his chi says yes also” (Achebe, 1958, p. 18).

These proverbs were used in a range of different circumstances, and for varied purpose. The study has shown that some of them were used as a mean of excuse to do or not do something, others as an instrument for praise, encouragement, mean of persuasion, even others used to emphasize, rebuke, to show disappointment, to solve problems, to console, as a mean of reconciliation, to entertain, explain a point and as a warn.

4.3.2. Interpretation of the data found

For the sake of space allowed for this paper to have, only four proverbs will be discussed and presented. They are:

1. “A man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself” (Achebe, 1958, p. 69).
2. “A baby on its mothers back does not know that the way is long” (Achebe, 1958, p. 73).
3. “Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching” (Achebe, 1958, pp. 14, 142).
4. “When a man says yes his chi says yes also” (Achebe, 1958, pp. 18, 92).

The proverbs to be analyzed here were chosen for their peculiarities. For example the two firsts are proverbs uttered by women, something rare in the Novel, where the most part of the proverbs are said by men. And the other two proverbs are unique in the way that they are repeated in the novel, one in it full form and the other is mentioned again to stress that it lacks validity.

4.3.2.1.Women and proverbs in the novel

As portrayed in the Novel, women in the Ibo community had the duty to instruct and educate their daughters. This by no means signifies that they had no control over their sons, or had no share in their education. Rather, there are many instances in the Novel were boys are mentioned sat together with their mothers for instructions and entertainment. The mean of instruction women particularly used was storytelling, and within the stories proverbs were mentioned. Thus, proverbs were also used by women as a mean of instruction and education.

As mentioned above, there are only two proverbs in the Novel uttered by women. The first of them was quoted by one of Okwonkwo's wives, i.e. his second wife, called Ekwefi, mother of a girl called Ezinma, and the second was mentioned by a woman called Chielo serving as a priestess of a god named Agbala. Here is the first proverb:

- **"A man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself"** (Achebe, 1958, p. 69).

This proverb had it place in chapter eleven of the Novel. It was uttered in a story by Ekwefi while in a share of stories with her daughter Ezinma. The story was about a tortoise and the birds. The tortoise was full of cunnings, and used to take advantages of others. Because of this, the birds had decided not to take with him to a feast in the sky. Because of the famine in those days, the tortoise had to find ways to get the help of the birds to the feast where plenty of food would be served and he consequently safeguard his life. Thus, he managed to convince them that he had changed and no tricks would be played. To emphasize this point he uttered the proverb "A man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself" (Achebe, 1958, p .69).

This proverb is an example of a social proverb, i.e. it deals with the way people are affected by their own actions and the actions of the others. In a society where people are interdependent, harming others should stir revenge or either provokes resentment. These feelings consequently would prevent others to help those who had harmed them in one way or the other when in need. That is why it is said that making trouble for others is also making it for oneself.

- **"A baby on its mother's back does not know that the way is long"** (Achebe, 1958, p. 73).

Okwonkwo had a daughter with Ekwefi named Ezinma and she was their only begotten child and the center of her mother's world. A medicine man, who was also a diviner of the Afa Oracle said that Ezinma was an Ogbanje, i.e. "one of those wicked children who, when they died, entered their mothers' wombs to be born again". This was said of Ezinma because her mother "Ekwefi had suffered a good deal in her life. She had born ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three" (Achebe, 1958, p. 54).

After Ezinma's recovery from a sickness that had almost lead her to death, Chielo, a priestess of an Oracle called Agbala, "the oracle of the Hills and the Caves" (Achebe, 1958, p. 34), payed at night a visit to Okwonkwo in order to take ezinma with her, alleging that she had been ordered by her god, Agbala who wanted to see his daughter. Though Okwonkwo had repeatedly refused the request, Chielo, with authority, took Ezinma and placed her on her back. On this, Ezinma began to cry. To comfort the girl, Chielo asked Ezinma not to cry and uttered the proverb "A baby on its mother's back does not know that the way is long" (Achebe, 1958, p. 73).

This is the second proverb in the novel uttered by a woman, and it found a place in chapter eleven. What is here is an instance of a Scientific and psychological proverb, because it is clearly based on the experience humans have with babies. Especially in Africa, when women move from a place to other, they take their babies on their back. This practice refrain the children from getting tired because of the distance. Moreover, they even do not see or perceive the long way their mothers cover. That is why for a child the idea of walking long ways, but in their mother's back, is comfortable and consoling. That is also the motive of the saying "A baby on its mother's back does not know that the way is long" (Achebe, 1958, p. 73).

4.3.2.2.Elliptical proverb in the Novel

In chapter three of the Novel can be found an example of an elliptical proverb. That is, a proverb not uttered in its full form, or having some of its elements missing. The proverb is:

- **"Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching"** (Achebe, 1958, pp. 14).

And its full form is found in chapter twenty four. It says:

- **“Eneke the bird was asked why he was always on the wing and he replied: ‘Men have learned to shoot without missing [their mark] and I have learned to fly without perching [on a twig]”** (Achebe, 1958, pp. 142).

In the first moment the proverb was uttered, the words [their mark] and [on a twig] had not appeared, but still it preserved its entire meaning. It seemed like the modification, by removing the final parts of the proverb, was not significant for the changing of the meaning. This, in fact, is one essential characteristic of an elliptical proverb. They, after being changed, still remain meaningful.

In its first occurrence, the proverb was uttered by Nwakibie, a wealthy man in Okwonkwo’s village, in a conversation with Okwonkwo, who was in need of some seed yams for his farm. In their time young people were soft, afraid of hard work. But things were different with Okwonkwo, a young bold man without any fear of hard work. He deserved a well given praise from this old and wealthy man of the village of Umuofia.

This proverb is a scientific and psychological proverb, based in the human experience with one particular bird called Eneke and its keen ability of flying without resting on a twig. His ability is compared with the ability a man might have to shoot without missing an established mark. In fact, it is commendable when seriously a man takes action toward sharpening one’s ability or skill, aiming proficiency. This was the intent in Nwakibie’s utterance of the proverb.

The proverb is mentioned one second time by Okika, a great man and an orator, in the occasion of their release from their imprisonment by the colonizer, in a great gathering of the men of Umuofia against the colonization while delivering a speech. In this second instance, the proverb is being used with a clear different purpose, i.e. encouragement to the men of Umuofia to start thinking on strategies to root out the colonizer. They had to believe on their abilities and sharpened skills of fighting, just like the Eneke bird believed on his abilities and capacities.

4.3.2.3.Denial of a proverb validity in the Novel

- **“When a man says yes his chi says yes also”** (Achebe, 1958, pp. 18, 92).

The community portrayed in the Novel is very religious. It honor, among others, their gods, and ancestors with many rituals of sacrifice and offerings. That is not to

wonder if a religious proverb is found in the Novel. In fact, as it can be seen from above, there are three religious proverbs in the Novel. This one for example shows in what the Ibo people of the Novel believed in relation to their gods. The word “chi” from the proverb designates a personal god, responsible for the fate of the one who worshiped him. People believed that if one has a good Chi, he would be prosperous, but if a bad one, evil fortune would follow him or her to the grave.

This proverb appears for the first time in chapter four being quoted by the narrator in relation to Okwonkwo’s success. He says: “At an early age he had achieved fame as the greatest wrestler in all the land. That was not luck. At most one could say that his Chi or personal god was good”, then, he quotes the proverb under discussion and continue saying, “Okwonkwo said yes very strongly, so his Chi agreed” (Achebe, 1958, p. 17). From here is clear the use made by the proverb in the Novel in that particular context, i.e. to explain the reason why Okwonkwo was prosperous.

Later, in chapter fourteen, the proverb is used again by the narrator still in relation to Okwonkwo. But at this time, Okwonkwo was ill-fated. In fact, he had to leave his father homeland to reside in his mother homeland because of an unexpected killing of a man of the village. His all expectations and prospects with the Umuofia community were in danger of not being realized. Is in Okwonkwo misfortune, that the narrator retells the proverb denying its validity. Because Okwonkwo had said clearly yes to his goals and directed his all effort toward achieving the same goals, but his Chi was not made for great things. So, “the saying of the elders was not true – that if a man said yea his chi also affirmed” (Achebe, 1958, p. 92).

Chapter V

Conclusion

5.1.Conclusion

The aim of the present work was to find out the theoretical/thematic data in relation to the proverbs in the Novel *Things Fall Apart* by a Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe. To achieve this goal, the use of qualitative research method was of extreme importance. This method helped to find the textual data and subjective conclusion through the critical analysis of proverbs in context.

This work is mainly a descriptive work, it focus is to present one reality and help those interested to understand better the reality being analyzed. In this case, what is pretended here is the description of the proverbs in the Novel, its classification and meaning through the context in which they were applied in the Novel *Things Fall Apart.*

Through repeated close reading, there was found thirty four proverbs in the Novel. Thirty two proverbs, the majority of them, were said by men in the Novel and only two of them uttered by women. There is not any instance where the colonizers or the children used a proverb. The study also showed the presence of one elliptical proverb and one proverb which had its validity denied.

The thirty four proverbs were properly divided into four classes according to the themes that they present, i.e. scientific or psychological, religious, social and ethical. In the Novel there are nineteen scientific or psychological proverbs, three religious proverbs, nine social proverbs and three ethical proverbs. For the sake of space allowed for a final research paper to have, only four proverbs were presented for analysis, interpretation and explanation. These four proverbs were chosen because of their unique traces that distinguished them from the others thirty.

For example, the two first proverbs analyzed are proverbs used by two women, something rare in the Novel, were the majority of proverbs are said by men. And the other proverb that deserved a space here was an elliptical proverb. In fact, in the Novel there is only one instance were an elliptical proverb is used. Finally, the last proverb that was analyzed, interpreted and explained, alike the elliptical proverb, was repeated but had its

validity denied, denied by the reality of the conditions of life that surrounded the main character of the Novel.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

This paper lacks completeness. Though it answers some questions relevant for the critical understanding of the Novel Things Fall Apart, there are many other questions without answer. Now it is possible to answer questions such as:

1. How many proverbs are there in the Novel?
2. How can they be classified?
3. How many elliptical proverbs are there?
4. What about the women, do they use proverbs in the novel? How many?
5. In which circumstance do women use proverbs?
6. With what purpose do women use them? Etc.

But dozens of other questions are still without answer, for example:

1. What are the implications that result from the frequent use of proverbs by Achebe in the Novel on the readers?
2. Despite its importance, does the novel portray proverbs as unquestionable truth?
3. How the culture of Ibo people is reflected by the proverb in the Novel?
4. Why proverbs and storytelling were chosen as a mean of instruction for the young people?
5. How the Novel shows the effectiveness of proverbs as a medium of instruction?
6. How the characters in the Novel responded the use of proverbs?

These are some questions to be answered by future researches on the use of proverbs in the Novel Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe. The answers for these questions will surely augment the understanding of the great value this masterpiece of art have, augment the reader pleasure on reading the Novel, as well as, help the Africans to value the great treasure embedded in the African cultures.

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